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EDUCATION

Fountain Hills schools food service: More healthy options

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(JASON W. BROOKS/INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA)

Scott Wrightington, director of operations for Child Nutrition Services-Sodexo for the Fountain Hills Unified School District, presented some new developments and elements of district food service to the Governing Board during a recent meeting.

Posted Monday, October 13, 2025 8:00 am

By Jason W. Brooks (/browse.html?byline=Jason%20Brooks)
Mail (mailto:jbrooks@iniusa.org) | X: @JasonWBrooks2 (https://twitter.com/JasonWBrooks2)

Ask any grandparent how school lunchroom food has changed through the years, they'll probably answer one of two ways: It was better then or it's better now.

The Fountain Hills Unified School District's vendor representative said it's a priority to make sure the food's better now.

Scott Wrightington, director of operations for Child Nutrition Services-Sodexo, presented some new developments and elements of district food service to the Governing Board during a recent meeting.

Wrightington said one of the changes he's been asked about the most in 2025 involve food dyes and pending or recent federal government efforts to regulate dyes beyond past requirements, as a next frontier or push to make school food healthier.

"Sodexo's meal programs (separated from snacks) are already 99-percent-plus free of additives such as dyes," Wrightington said. "We are still looking and working with manufacturers and monitoring federal announcements, but that already has progressed."

Wrightington said the USDA's Smart Snacks in School regulation — the implementation which Sodexo addresses online, extensively — traditionally is where comfort-food extras like chips and drinks have resided, but could be moving in a more nutrition-focused direction as well.

Wrightington said by the start of next school year, 2026-27, he expects to see new Smart Snack regulations in place, possibly preempted by industry changes.

"We don't have any official word yet about changes to the Smart Snack program," Wrightington said. "So we're talking with and monitoring both government announcements and seeing how companies like Kellogg's and Frito Lay are changing ingredients and product lines to remove substances that could get banned."

Wrightington said it's his personal goal to make Fountain Hills food service among the best in Arizona school districts.

"I want my boss to bring people here to show them, this is how things are really well-run," he said. "We work well with the district and have become a model."

Wrightington cited the number of bread options and the presence of a salad bar as among the perks and going above and beyond USDA requirements, that he and Sodexo bring to Fountain Hills schools.

"With the hot boxes, we have a couple of different types of sandwiches going in there, every day," Wrightington said. "And we have a hot-dog roller machine in there now for the students."

Wrightington also said support from Sodexo leadership and other staff, such as west-region nutritionist Helen Hoadley, have been instrumental in major initiatives.

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"We passed an audit with flying colors," Wrightington said of one accomplishment of food service from the past year, done with Sodexo support. "The state can choose three- or five-year audits, and said 'We'll see you in five years.'"

Wrightington said it's not just Superintendent Cain Jagodzinski or board members who can tour some Fountain Hills food facilities; parents can also visit a campus and view food options and procedures.

"Come see what we're doing," Wrightington said.

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Jason W. Brooks
News Editor | Chandler Independent

Jason W. Brooks **joined Independent Newsmedia, Inc., USA, in July 2021 as an associate editor. After a year covering Buckeye, he has covered Chandler since the fall of 2022, in addition to assisting the Daily Independent throughout his time at INI.**

Education: **University of New Mexico, bachelor of arts in journalism and mass communication, print emphasis, English minor.**

Random Fact: **He and his siblings witnessed a Space Shuttle launch and landing in the same year in person, on opposite coasts.**

Hobbies: **Karaoke, bicycling and American Sign Language.**

Community: **He supports animal shelters.**

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Keywords

Fountain Hills, food, pizza, school lunches, bread, salad bar

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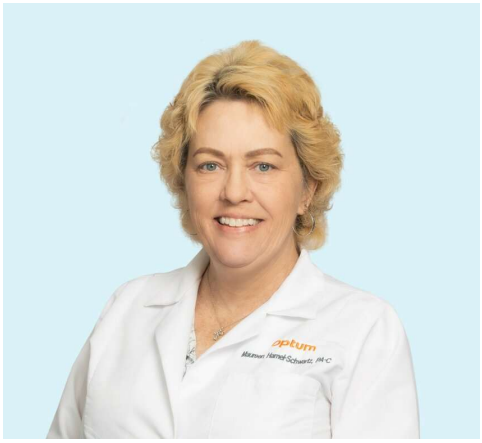

From treating breast cancer patients to becoming one — lessons learned (/stories/from-treating-breast-cancer-patients-to-becoming-one-lessons-learned,624718)

As a physician assistant who diagnoses people with breast cancer, I never imagined I'd be writing about this important subject from the perspective of a patient. For years, I've sat across from women, delivering the news that would change their lives. Then one day, I became the woman on the receiving end.

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We all need to be "in on it" (/stories/we-all-need-to-be-in-on-it,624682)

Dr. Lauren Gardner (Johns Hopkins) writes: "Public Health is a community responsibility. Everyone has to be in on it, because otherwise it doesn't really work." (John Heasley USA Today ...

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Clearing up record on Fountain Hills development agreement (/stories/clearing-up-record-on-fountain-hills-development-agreement,624446)

Let's be perfectly clear. I had to think about a regular speaker's latest public comment about the Park Place development agreement at the latest council meeting. His claims that the agreement ...

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Let's focus on uniting, not dividing, Fountain Hills (/stories/lets-focus-on-uniting-not-dividing-fountain-hills,624351)

I'm writing in response to the proposal to rename the Fountain Hills Community Center after Charlie Kirk. While individuals may choose to support or admire his work, public facilities like the ...

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Shopping locally in Fountain Hills (/stories/shopping-locally-in-fountain-hills,624134)

In response to a recent letter from Silvia Schneider about struggling businesses in Fountain Hills, I was a retail small business owner/operator at a wonderful small town in the Midwest for most of ...

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